



Building Bridges to Improve Birth across the Borders: an in-depth study of maternal healthcare in remote and contested areas of Myanmar

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Appendix 1

GCRF Literature Review Protocol

A Scoping Review of Maternal Health Interventions in Low Income Countries

The International Classifications of Diseases (ICD-10) defines maternal health as ‘the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of the end of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or incidental causes (WHO 2010, Pg 156). Causes of maternal mortality are wide-ranging but include abortion, haemorrhage, pre-eclampsia, prolonged and obstructed labour, infection/sepsis and uterine rupture. Women from middle income and lower income countries are at higher risk, particularly in post conflict settings (Falb et al, 2014). Effective interventions to address these challenges are a key aspect of the reduction of maternal mortality rates. However, cultural and contextual influences also play a significant role. This review will explore these factors to inform the development of the next stages of a maternal health project in Myanmar with an emphasis on the interrelated contextual factors of care including socio-cultural, geographical and healthcare influences. A scoping review allows a systematic approach to the process and reporting of the review while allowing a mapping of and identification of gaps in current evidence and the development of the conceptual boundaries of the topic, in this case the interrelated factors in maternal health interventions (Peters et al, 2015).

The Peters framework (Peters et al, 2015) will be implemented to guide the process. This includes:

- 1) Defining and aligning the objectives and question
- 2) Developing the inclusion criteria in line with the objectives
- 3) Describe the approach to searching, selection, extraction and charting of data
- 4) Search for the evidence
- 5) Select the evidence
- 6) Extract all relevant data
- 7) Chart all evidence
- 8) Summarise all evidence
- 9) Document findings and share with relevant health professionals

Aim: To complete a comprehensive mapping of maternal health interventions in low income countries with a focus on contextual influences.

Research Question: What does the current evidence tell us about the factors and influences of maternal health interventions in low income countries and the impact of these on maternal healthcare?

Objectives

- 1) Identify all relevant studies related to maternal health interventions in low income countries
- 2) Identify common factors in the studies
- 3) Identify the inclusion or exclusion of key concepts of contextual and cultural factors
- 4) Evaluate the current research evidence on current maternal health practice
- 5) Evaluate the impact of these factors on maternal healthcare

Methods

A scoping review will be completed to examine the evidence of maternal health interventions to address maternal mortality in low income countries. This type of review was considered the most effective as it allows the mapping of recent evidence and the emergence of key concepts currently occurring in maternal healthcare (Peters, 2017). Two key concepts will be explored and mapped within maternal health interventions: contextual and cultural practices. These concepts are particularly important within conflict and ethnic settings and will allow a comprehensive evidence base for future maternal health interventions and the identification of gaps in the research knowledge base.

Articles will be examined using the Population, Concept and Context evaluations (Peters et al, 2017) in line with the Joanna Briggs Institute recommendations. This will include mothers who are experiencing pregnancy, birth or the early postnatal stages up to six weeks. The key concept will be effective health interventions and there will be a focus on the contextual and cultural factors related to the location and groups being studied. The context of this study will be left open to interventions in the community, hospital or clinic to allow a range of interventions to be identified. In line with scoping review recommendations initial searches will include articles from any type of research methodology or evidence.

International journals and databases will be searched for interventions related to maternal health in low income settings. This will include interventions implemented or recommended by the World Health Organisation and UNICEF.

Implementing a systematic search strategy, six databases will be searched for literature examining factors related to maternal health interventions in low income settings. These will be:

- CINAHL
- Scopus
- Web of Science
- Embase
- Medline
- Global Health Library

Inclusion Criteria

Articles between 2000 and 2018 will be examined to identify interventions which have a focus on maternal health following the most recent maternal health policy interventions. This timeframe includes the development of the Millennium Development Goals and the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals. Search terms will include variations on maternal health, maternal mortality, maternal death, low income, maternal health education, community interventions, hospital interventions, clinic programmes, culture, context, ethnic groups, health interventions and motherhood programmes.

Exclusion Criteria

Exclusion criteria will include studies with a focus on reproductive projects that do not include pregnancy or birth, mental health projects, disability or chronic illnesses and interventions based in high or middle- income countries or before 2000.

Quality Assurance

In line with the scoping review methodology a formal quality assessment process will not be completed as part of this review. This is because the aim of this review is to map all available evidence in maternal health interventions in the last ten years, as opposed to only the best evidence. However, a data analysis table will be designed to gather and collate all relevant information from the studies and chart all the evidence. This evidence will then be analysed for common themes and practices, as well as contextual information.

Conclusion

This review will allow the exploration and evaluation of current evidence of maternal health interventions in low income countries and the identification of key contextual factors which influence maternal health.

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